GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ABSTRACT

Public Services – A.P. Forest Department – Unauthorized access of 'Confidential' Minutes of the Selection Committee Meeting held on 30.08.2023 – Inquiry under Rule 20 of Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (Classification, Control & Appeal) Rules, 1991 against Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada - Articles of Charges – Issued.

ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (SEC.IV) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Rt.No.56 **Dated:14.05.2024**

Read the following:

1) From the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force, A.P., Mangalagiri, Lr.Rc.No.15391/2018/Admin.1, dated 18.10.2023.
2) From the Under Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi, Lr.F.No.15011/20/2023-IFS-II, dated 06.12.2023.

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O R D E R:

It is proposed to hold an inquiry against Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 20 of the A.P. Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1991.

2. The substance of the imputations of misconduct or misbehavior in respect of which the inquiry is proposed to be held is set out in the enclosed statement of Article of Charge (Annexure-II). A list of documents by which, and a list of witnesses by whom, the Articles of Charges are proposed to be sustained are also enclosed (Annexure-III and IV).

3. Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada is directed to submit a written statement of his defense within (10) days from the date of receipt of this order and also to state whether he desires to heard in person.

4. Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada is informed that an inquiry will be held only in respect of those Articles of Charges as are not admitted. He should, therefore, specifically admit or deny each Article of Charge.

5. Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada is further informed that if he does not submit his written statement of defense within the time specified in Para-3 above, further action will be taken based on the material available.

[P.T.O]

6. Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada is informed that, under Rule 24 of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, no Government servant shall bring or attempt to bring any political or outside influence to bear upon any superior authority to further his interest in respect of matters pertaining to his service under the Government. If any representation is received on his behalf from another person in respect of any matter dealt within these proceedings, it will be presumed that Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada is aware of such a representation and that it has been made at his instance and action will be taken against him for violation of Rule 24 of Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964.

7. The receipt of this order may be acknowledged.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

NEERABH KUMAR PRASAD
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada through the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, A.P., Mangalagiri.

Copy to:
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, A.P., Mangalagiri. (He is requested to serve the orders on the individual, obtain his dated acknowledgment on the duplicate copy and resubmit the same to the Government for record).
SF/SC (Computer No.2259546)

//FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER

ANNEXURE-I

STATEMENT OF ARTICLES OF CHARGE FRAMED AGAINST SRI K. ASHOK KUMAR, DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, PRESENTLY WORKING AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, A.P. MEDICINAL & AROMATIC PLANTS BOARD, VIJAYAWADA

That the said Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada from 25.07.2022 to till date, has grossly neglected his legitimate duties and committed misconduct as mentioned in the following Article of Charge:

ARTICLE OF CHARGE:

That the said Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada has exhibited grave misconduct by behaving in a manner which is unbecoming of Public servant by unauthorized procurement and possession of copy of Minutes of Selection Committee Meeting held on 30.08.2023 at UPSC, New Delhi which is classified as "CONFIDENTIAL" and thereby violated the Rule 3 of A.P. Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, by causing embarrassment to the A.P. State Government.

Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada has failed to maintain devotion to duty, absolute integrity and sense of propriety, exhibited misconduct of unbecoming of a Government employee and violated Rule 3 of Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964. **Hence, the Charge**.

NEERABH KUMAR PRASAD
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER

ANNEXURE–II

STATEMENT OF IMPUTATIONS AND MISCONDUCT OR MISBEHAVIOUR IN SUPPORT OF ARTICLES OF CHARGE FRAMED AGAINST SRI K. ASHOK KUMAR, DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, PRESENTLY WORKING AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, A.P. MEDICINAL & AROMATIC PLANTS BOARD, VIJAYAWADA

That the said Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada from 25.07.2022 to till date, has grossly neglected his legitimate duties and committed misconduct as mentioned in the following Article of Charge:

ARTICLE OF CHARGE:

That the said Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada has exhibited grave misconduct by behaving in a manner which is unbecoming of Public servant by unauthorized procurement and possession of copy of Minutes of Selection Committee Meeting held on 30.08.2023 at UPSC, New Delhi which is classified as "CONFIDENTIAL" and thereby violated the Rule 3 of A.P. Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, by causing embarrassment to the A.P. State Government.

BASIS OF THE CHARGE:

That Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada has filed Contempt Case No.5417 of 2023 in I.A.No.2 of 2022 in W.P.No.30268/2022 against 1) Sri Neerabh Kumar Prasad, IAS, Special Chief Secretary to Government, Environment, Forests, Science & Technology Department, A.P. Secretariat, Velagapudi; and 2) Sri Y. Madhusudhana Reddy, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force, A.P., Mangalagiri for not intimating the orders, dated 20.09.2022 of Hon'ble High Court of A.P., Amaravati in I.A.No.2 of 2022 in W.P.No.30268/2022 to the Selection Committee.

As seen from the documents filed by Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Board, Vijayawada in the contempt case, it is noticed that the individual has produced a copy of minutes of Selection Committee Meeting held on 30.08.2023 and made some claims based on the same. However, as per the material made available on records, the minutes of meeting held on 30.08.2023 was yet to be finalized. Further, the minutes of Meeting held on 30.08.2023 is classified as "CONFIDENTIAL". Further, the Under Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi in his letter F.No.15011/20/2023-IFS-II, dated 06.12.2023 has also informed that Un-authorized possession of Minutes of Meeting, classified as **'CONFIDENTIAL'**, is an offence; and requested the State government to examine the matter and take necessary action as per Conduct Rules as applicable to the Andhra Pradesh State Forest Service officers. Un-authorized procurement and possession of such confidential document of Government of India is a grave misconduct and amounts to behaving in a manner unbecoming of Government employee.

[P.T.O]

As per the Rule 3 of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964 --

(1) Every Government employee shall be devoted to his duty and shall maintain absolute integrity, discipline, impartiality and a sense of propriety.

(2) No Government employee shall behave in a manner which is unbecoming of such employee or derogatory to the prestige of Government.

(3) No Government employee shall act in a manner which will place his official position under any kind of embarrassment.

Thereby, he has exhibited grave misconduct by behaving in a manner unbecoming of Public servant by unauthorized procurement and possession of copy of Minutes of Selection Committee Meeting held on 30.08.2023 at Union Public Service Commission, New Delhi which is classified as "CONFIDENTIAL" and thereby violated the Rule 3 of Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964. Hence, the charge.

NEERABH KUMAR PRASAD
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER

ANNEXURE–III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BY WHICH THE ARTICLES OF CHARGE FRAMED AGAINST SRI K. ASHOK KUMAR, DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, PRESENTLY WORKING AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, A.P. MEDICINAL & AROMATIC PLANTS BOARD, VIJAYAWADA ARE PROPOSED TO BE SUSTAINED

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1. C.C.No.5417 of 2023 in I.A.No.2 of 2022 in W.P.No.30268 of 2022 filed by Sri K. Ashok Kumar, Dy.CF in the Hon'ble High Court of A.P.
2. PCCF & HoFF, A.P., Mangalagiri Ref.No.15391/2018/Admn.1, dated 18.10.2023.
3. Under Secretary to Government of India, MoEF&CC, New Delhi F.No.15011/20/2023-IFS-II, dated 06.12.2023.
4. PCCF & HoFF, A.P., Mangalagiri Ref.No.15391/2018/Admn.1, dated 19.12.2023.

NEERABH KUMAR PRASAD
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER

ANNEXURE–IV

LIST OF WITNESSES BY WHOM THE ARTICLES OF CHARGE FRAMED AGAINST SRI K. ASHOK KUMAR, DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, PRESENTLY WORKING AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, A.P. MEDICINAL & AROMATIC PLANTS BOARD, VIJAYAWADA ARE PROPOSED TO BE SUSTAINED:

-NIL-

NEERABH KUMAR PRASAD
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER